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Doctors demonstrate at Maitighar in Kathmandu on Wednesday against the manhandling of health workers at Manipal Hospital in Pokhara.

## Stringent law fails to stop assaults on doctors

Thousands of patients suffered, as resident doctors shunned services on Wednesday.

🗖 ARJUN POUDEL

KATHMANDU, SEPT 27

Thousands of patients throughout the country were deprived of health care services on Wednesday, as resident doctors across the country skipped duty to protest Monday's assault on doctors at Manipal Teaching Hospital in Pokhara.

Around 450 resident doctors serving at the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital (TUTH) had decided to boycott the services on Tuesday evening after learning about the assault.

But fellow doctors serving at major hospitals and medical colleges across the country voluntarily boycotted services after their colleagues (resident doctors) at TUTH decided not to serve without a security guarantee.

"How can we provide care to patients when we are under constant threat of physical assault," said Dr Arun Upreti, a member of the National Resident Doctor Association. "We cannot serve patients until we are

assured safety and security. The problem is, senior doctors are generally more involved in academic activities and are less involved in direct patient care at big hospitals.

As a result, when resident doctors shun duties, patients-both out-patient-department, in-patients and those waiting for elective surgeries were deprived of essential services on Wednesday.

This is not the first instance of doctors being assaulted by relatives of the patients who died in the course of treatment, alleging medical

>> Continued on page 2

## In Hangzhou, Nepal rewrite T20I cricket record books

Malla smashes the fastest T20I century and Airee cracks the fastest T20I fifty as Nepal post a record high total of 314 runs in the format against Mongolia at Asiad.

DIL KUMAR ALE MAGAR

Nepal rewrote the T20 International cricket history on Wednesday, shattering multiple records on the opening day of the men's cricket competition in their sensational 273-run victory

over Mongolia at the Asian Games in

Hangzhou, China on Wednesday. Sent in to bat first after losing the toss, Nepal amassed a whopping 314-3, the record highest total in men's T20I. In doing so, Nepal eclipsed the previous highest total of 278-3 by Afghanistan against Ireland in 2019.

The Rhinos then dismissed Mongolia for 41 in 13.1 overs for an emphatic win, setting a record for the biggest run-margin victory in the T20s. The previous largest margin of victory in T20I was recorded by Czech Republic when they defeated Panama by 208 runs in 2021.

Kushal Malla led the carnage of Mongolia, who were making their international debut in cricket, at the Zhejiang University of Technology Cricket Field, smashing the record fastest men's T20I century off 34 balls.

Malla surpassed the previous records of fastest hundred jointly held by South African cricketer David Miller (against Bangladesh in 2017), India's Rohit Sharma (against Sri Lanka in 2017) and Czech Republic's Sudesh Wickramasekara (against Turkey in 2019), all of whom had struck a century in 35 balls.

Malla remained unbeaten on 50-ball 137 that featured eight fours and 12 sixes.

Malla, at 19 years and 206 days, also became the second-youngest batter to score a century in men's T20Is.

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Dipendra Singh Airee

The Rhinos dismiss Mongolia for 41 in 13.1 overs for an emphatic victory.

Gustav Mckeon of France scored 61-ball 109 during the 2024 T20 World Cup Sub-Regional Group B match against Switzerland before turning 19 in July 2022.

Dipendra Singh Airee racked up another record for Nepal, cracking the fastest T20I fifty in just nine balls to go past India's legendary all-rounder Yuvraj Singh's record of a 12-ball fifty against England during the ICC T20 World Cup 2007. Airee cracked eight maximums.

Airee added two runs in the last ball



Kushal Malla

to finish his innings with a 10-ball 52. Airee's strike rate of 520 is also the best in a T20I innings of 10 or more balls. Malcolm Waller's strike rate of 430 in a ten-ball innings against Matabeleland Tuskers in 2016 in Zimbabwe's domestic T20 competition was the previous highest strike rate.

Malla came in to bat at the end of the fifth over with Nepal at 42-1 after opener Aasif Sheikh (16) was caught behind by Enkh-erdene Otgonbayar off Luvsanzundui Erdenebulgan.

Sheikh's opening partner, Kushal Bhurtel, then returned to the pavilion scoring 19 after he was caught by Mungun Altankhuyag off Davaasuren Jamyansuren.

But Malla kept on the onslaught, putting on a 193-run stand with captain Rohit Paudel, who made 27-ball 61, for the third wicket in less

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### **TODAY**

### □ NATIONAL

The Salyan stretch of Rapti Highway is prone to accidents. The 135-km road, which connects Dang, Salyan and Rukum districts, came into operation 36 years ago. The Dang-Salyan section is 91-km long. Pg 2

Nepal's spending on debt servicing nearly doubled last fiscal year to Rs222.74 billion amid a ballooning public debt and high interest rates on internal loans. This is an 83 percent rise from the previous fiscal. Pg 3

### □ EDITORIAL

The 13-point joint statement released by Nepali and Chinese officials in Beijing on Wednesday, before Prime Minister Dahal left for Tibet on his way back, is diplomatic sweet talk for the most part. Pg 4



### ■ MONEY

Nepal's foreign direct investment stock rose 16 percent to Rs264.3 billion at the end of the fiscal year 2021-22, according to a survey report. The FDI stocks measure the total direct investment at a given time. Pg 5

#### ■ WORLD

Private Travis King, the US soldier who ran into North Korea in July, is in US custody after being expelled by North Korea into China, US officials said on Wednesday. Pg 6

Germany has welcomed a decision by neutral Switzerland to open the way to sell back some of its German-made Leopard II tanks to help rebuild stocks depleted by aid to Ukraine. Pg 6

## Scotland to have UK's first drug consumption room

Board argues the move would take the issue off streets, where it was hurting local communities and businesses.



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LONDON, SEPT 27

The UK's first official drug consumption room for illegal drugs will open in Scotland after receiving approval Wednesday, after years of arguments over the controversial harm-reduction policy for addicts.

The £2.3 million (\$2.8 million) facility in Glasgow will allow users to take their own drugs in a clean environment under medical supervision. The Glasgow City Integration Joint

Board finally approved it on Wednesday, ending years of political legal argument between the parliaments in London and Edinburgh. The board argued there was "over-

whelming international evidence" showing such facilities helped improve the "health, wellbeing and recovery" of addicts. It would also take the issue off the streets, where it was hurting local communities and businesses, the statement added. Scotland's most senior law officer,

Lord Advocate Dorothy Bain, paved the way for its approval earlier this month after campaigners pressed for legal clarification. It would not be "in the public interest" to prosecute people using such a facility, she said in a statement to the Scottish Parliament. The idea was first mooted dur-

ing an HIV outbreak in Glasgow in 2016, Scotland's biggest city. The virus can be passed on by

drug users sharing contaminated needles, and a study after the outbreak found that between 400 and 500 people were regularly

injecting drugs in Glasgow city centre. "Injecting in public spaces increases the risk of infection and other drug-related harms, and also causes a risk to the public from discarded

injecting equipment and needles,

said the board.

'Global evidence' suggests such facilities aid 'health, wellbeing and recovery' of addicts.

Scotland recorded its lowest drug death figures in five years in 2022, according to official figures published last month—but the rate there is still higher than in the rest of Europe.

The devolved Scottish government in Edinburgh, which sets health policy, backs the facility, but some lawmakers are concerned about its effect on local businesses

>> Continued on page 2



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### NATIONAL

#### □ DISTRICT DIGEST

#### Tiger found dead in Banke community forest

BANKE: An adult tiger was found dead inside the Ashok Community Forest in Rapti-Sonari Rural Municipality on Tuesday evening. According to Ganesh Khadka, acting forest officer of the Division Forest Office, a few days ago, the tiger was seen roaming around human settlements and also attacked cattle. The cause of the death of the tiger is still unknown. The carcass has been sent for a postmortem to confirm the cause of death. Further investigation is going on with the help of the officials of the Banke National Park, said Khadka.

#### Three-year-old girl dies from hornet stings

KHOTANG: A three-year-old girl resident of Khartamachha village in Ward 2 of Kepilasgadhi Rural Municipality died after being stung by hornets on Tuesday. According to Police Inspector Tikaram Baral, spokesperson of the District Police Office, the girl was stung by hornets when she was going to school with her elder sister. The girl was rushed to Diktel Hospital for treatment. The girl died in the course of treatment at the hospital at around 2:30 pm, said Baral.

#### Palpa school student found infected with malaria

PALPA: A 15-year-old student tested positive for malaria in Ringneraha of Purbakhola Rural Municipality in Palpa on Wednesday, "Previously, imported malaria cases were seen in people returning from India and other foreign countries," said Madhusudan Bhattarai, a lab technician at the local health office. The eighth grader, who was suffering from high fever, tested positive for the disease in a Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT) conducted at the local health post. According to the rural municipality's health office chief Mohan Dhakal, 98 residents of the rural municipality have been tested for malaria and vector surveillance will be conducted shortly

### UK to set up its first illegal drugs use room in Glasgow

Continued from page 1

"I welcome the news," said Scotland's drug and alcohol policy minister Elena Whitham. "We know this is not a silver bullet.

But we know from evidence from more than 100 facilities worldwide that safer drug consumption facilities work, Former addict Peter Krykant, who

set up an unofficial sterile drug-consumption facility from his minivan in criminalising users in a 2020 interview with AFP. "We need to pull them out of the

dark, rat-infested alleyways that they are currently using drugs in, pull them into a safe, supportive environment and offer them the help and support that they need," he said

SNP councillor Norman Macleod told the board meeting that heroin should be provided to addicts.

"We're still in a position where individuals who are addicted are obtaining their drugs from criminals and that, in my view, is profoundly to be regretted," he said.

## Rapti Highway turns into a death trap for travellers

Officials cite inadequate budget and poor maintenance. In the last fiscal year, 22 people died and 110 were injured in 84 accidents on the highway.





(Left) The wreckage of a jeep that met with an accident at Chorkhola in Kapurkot Rural Municipality in Salyan on Monday. Of the three people travelling in the jeep, two died on the spot and the third was injured. (Right) A passenger bus that overturned at Patare along the Rapti Highway in Salyan district in December last year. Eleven people were injured in the accident.

■ BIPLAB MAHARJAN

On Monday morning, a jeep carrying vegetables en route to Dang from Rolpa met with an accident at Chorkhola in ward 3 of the Rapti Highway in Kapurkot Rural Municipality in Salyan district. There were three people on board including the driver. The driver and one passenger died on the spot while the other passenger is receiving treatment at Tulsipur-based Provincial Hospital.

The 135-km Rapti Highway, which connects Dang, Salyan and Rukum districts, came into operation some 36 years ago. The Dang-Salyan stretch is 91-km-long while the Salyan-Rukum stretch is 44 km. The Salyan stretch of the highway is prone to accidents, said

On August 22, a passenger bus on its way from Rukum to Tulsipur got into an accident in Kapurkot-3 of Salyan leaving 18 people injured. Two of the people died during the course of treatment at the province hospital.

Data at the District Police Office, Salyan shows that in the last fiscal

year, 22 people died and 110 people were injured in 84 road accidents on the highway, which connects the three districts of the Lumbini and Karnali

According to Deputy Superintendentof Police Nabin Karki of the District Police Office, Salyan, nearly 100 people were injured in separate accidents on the Salyan stretch of the highway. "There have been many accidents

where passengers survived with minor injuries, according to the locals. These cases have not been registered with the police. Several accidents go unrecorded because the survivors don't contact the police," said Karki. "The Highway is becoming a death trap for vehicles leading to loss of lives. Most accidents occur because of the poor road condition, negligence of drivers and traffic rule violation. In the last five years, on average at least 40 accidents have occurred on the highway every year.'

According to Krishnaraj Pant, in-charge of the Sitparti-based Traffic Office located in Sharada Rural Municipality which patrols the highway in the Salyan stretch, despite sevawareness programmes and

steps, accidents have not reduced on the highway. The festivals are always marred by road accidents in Salyan,

"We are working hard to prevent further accidents. Road traffic is significantly high during the festive season and so do accidents. Most of the Salyan section of the highway is in hilly areas, where landslides and

The 135-km Rapti **Highway connects** Dang, Salyan and Rukum districts.

unseasonal floods also cause several accidents. During the festival season, public vehicles drive over the speed limit to save time and do more trips. This is one of the main reasons for the increase in road accidents during the festive season," said Pant. "The road is in a very bad condition due to a lack of maintenance, so they must drive carefully and follow traffic rules to

prevent accidents."

According to Durga Bahadur Pun, chairman of Kapurkot Rural Municipality, the condition of Kapurkot section of the road is in a poor state. The road is in need of repairs, blacktopping and maintenance, he said.

'There are no safety railings in the Kapurkot section. Vehicles lose control and swerve off cliffs. Around 10 to 15 people die in accidents every year on this road section alone. The festival season is coming, and we are worried about the condition of the road. We have requested the authorities concerned, including the road division to put up safety barriers along the road," said Durga Bahadur. "The Rapti Highway is repaired every year by spending millions of rupees, but the road is never safe and risk-free due to shoddy work."

Dal Bahadur Mahatara, a resident of Kapurkot-3, goes to visit his relatives every year during the festival season, but his journey is not restful.

"Every time I board a bus, I keep looking out the window. I can't rest easy," said Mahatara. "I was happy when the road came into operation,

but over the years this road has killed so many people," said Mahatara. "I

can't feel safe travelling on this road. Arbindra Kumar Rai, president of the Salyan-Rukum Bus Committee says that the common factor in vehicles involved in accidents is their poor condition. "The police only check the paperwork and do not examine whether the vehicles are road-worthy. The Department of Transport Management should ban old vehicles

from carrying passengers," said Rai. Ujjwal Jha, an engineer at the Road Division Office, Salyan responsible for the maintenance of the Salyan Section of the Rapti Highway, said that the budgets allocated to the three road divisions in three districts for road maintenance are insufficient. "The budget is limited and the contractors are dishonest. The road is always in a bad condition even after renovation. The office has not installed any railings on the highway due to a limited budget," said Jha. "This year, the gov ernment has allocated Rs600 million for the renovation of the highway, and the process of selecting contractors is going on. Hopefully, this year the reno-

vation work will be properly done.



Relief quota teachers, who say they were left out in the agreement between the Nepal Teachers' Federation and the government last week, stage protest at Maitighar on Wednesday by blocking the road. They say they should be made permanent through internal competition.

### South Korea to assist Nepal in graduating from LDC of-the-art TV factory since last April.

RASTRIYA SAMACHAR SAMITI

South Korea has said it would always be a partner to Nepal preparing to graduate from the least developed country status in 2026.

During an event organized on the occasion of the National Day of South Korean Ambassador to Nepal, Tea-Young Park, shared that Korean government has designated Nepal as a priority cooperation country for 15 consecutive years in development cooperation focusing on vocational training, health, agriculture,

"Over the past 30 years, KOICA [Korean aid agency] has implemented 157 development projects and provided degrees or training opportunities to Korea to around 2,000 Nepali people." Korea is the fourth largest foreign investor for Nepal. Samsung Electronics has been operating a stateHe further viewed a Nepali company, in partnership with Hyundai Motors, is preparing to start Nepal's first automobile production in Nawalparasi in the first half of next year. A Korean wig company, Mandumo,

invested here and hired 680 Nepali women, Park added. According to bilateral investment with Nepal is necessary to attract more investments by Korean companies. Korea is working on it, he shared He shared that South Korea is in the process of constructing its third hydropower plant in Nepal. The Korean government and companies completed the Modi Khola Hydropower Plant in 2000 and the Chameliya I in 2018. The 216MW Upper Trishuli-1 hydropower plant is set to be commissioned in 2027.

Park further said Nepal has secured the top position among Korea's 16 EPS partner nations for the first

months

## हामीलाई सम्भानुहोस

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### हामा विशेषताहरूः

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- मार्गदर्शन प्रदान गर्न सक्षम उत्पादन विशेषज्ञहरू
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राजधानी मै अवस्थित भएकाले कारखानाको अवलोकन र निग्रानिको सहजता साथै सवारी खर्च पनि बचत हने।

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#### Doctors nationwide protest, demanding safety guarantee should also increased but also the inci-

>> Continued from page 1 According to the Nepal

Medical Association, an umbrella organisation of medical doctors and dentists, at least seven incidents of misbehaviour and physical assault on medical personnel have recorded in the last four months. Dozens of cases of attacks on health workers and health facilities by the relatives of patients are recorded every year.

In an attempt to lessen physical incidents of assault on healthcare professionals and institutions, the government amended the Security of the Health and Health Organisations Act-2066. But despite the stringent measures, violence against

healthcare professionals has not declined. The amended law has a provision of a fine between Rs300,000 to 500,000 and a jail term of two to five years or both, for anyone violating the law.

On September 18, the association had called a nationwide strike to protest the assault on doctors in a Hetauda hospital. They ended the protest after signing a six-point agreement with the authorities. In the agreement, the government has promised to enforce the law effectively and arrest the preparators immediately. Some people involved in the attack were arrested in Hetauda.

"Our society is getting intolerant by the day, and

Ajay Kumar Goyal, Son of Kailash Chand Goyal, having date and place of birth 28th February 1995, Kuchaman City, Nagour, Rajasthan ands holdingIndian Passport (P6031935) Issued By Government Of India, do hereby affirm and declare that I got

married to Ms. Priyanka Jhunjhunwala daughter of Pawan Kumar Jhunjhunwala having date and place of birth 24th September 1995 Laxmangarh,Sikar, Rajasthan India, and holding Indian passport (U6470527) Issued by Government of India. The

marriage ceremony took place according to our traditional rituals

on 1st May 2023 at Agarwal Sewa Kendra, Kathmandu, Nepal We both are aware that there are no lawful impediments to this

people started taking the law into their own hands,' said Dr Bhagawan Koirala chairman of the Nepal Medical Council, the national regulatory body of medical doctors. "Authorities must enforce the law effectively. Patients and their relatives should be communicated properly and health professionals

responsibly."

Due to incidents of violence against doctors and health workers, the risk increases that thousands of patients throughout the country may not get treatment, which is their constitutional right.

"Not only assaults on health workers have



marriage, should there be any additional info pertaining to this kindly direct the same to the following address. A doctor chants slogans during a demonstration in Kathmandu on Wednesday as medics across the country abstained from their duties.

seeking legal action, relatives of patients started to take the law into their own hands, which is a serious matter.' Doctors' inability to communicate properly with patients and their relatives, the trend of ill-equipped and understaffed hospitals holding serious cases for

dents of revenge attacks

increased, and these have

made healthcare workers

and health facilities

unsafe," said Dr Prakash

Budhathoki, spokesman of

the Ministry of Health and

Population. "Instead of

long, and healthcare facilities and doctors being subjected to huge compensations are among the reasons for the growing conflict between doctors and relatives of patients, multiple doctors the Post talked Providing medical care

has become tougher by the day, as every time something goes wrong with patients during treatment, people accuse doctors of medical negligence and violence, according to Budhathoki.

### **NEWS**

## Activist Iih calls off protest after agreement with KMC

The youth activist was staging a standing protest outside the metropolis office for over a week demanding alternative arrangements for street vendors

KATHMANDU. SEPT 2

The Kathmandu Metropolitan City and activist Iih reached a four-point agreement on Wednesday evening. Iih was staging a standing protest outside the metropolitan city office continuously for the past eight days, demanding that street vendors. who have been banned from running their businesses on the pavements of Kathmandu streets, be given an appropriate alternative to run their busi-

The two sides have agreed to form an eight-member committee to study the issue and suggest ways to address the problem

The committee is given two months to submit a report offering suggestions on places and time duration suitable to run street businesses. The committee comprises three representatives from the KMC, two on behalf of activist Iih, one each from the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport Management and the Ministry of Urban Development, and one representative from the

According to the agreement, the KMC will take initiatives within a week to identify appropriate alternative places for those who had been running their businesses on footpaths or other public plac-

Chinikaji Maharjan, executive committee member of the KMC, and Dhiraj Joshi, an official of the secretariat of Kathmandu Mayor Balendra Shah, and activist Iih signed the agreement. Representatives of street vendors were also present

In 2020, Iih had staged a hunger strike demanding government accountability in responding to

On Wednesday afternoon, the National Human Rights Commission expressed its serious concern towards Iih's health condition. By that time, Iih had been over a week into his protest. Members of the public and politicians from across the spectrum had visited him to express their solidarity to his peaceful protest and demands.

Earlier, in the afternoon, Mayor Shah had asked activist Iih and his supporters to end the protest.

Taking to his Facebook account, Shah said that he had no authority to fulfil the demands set forth by Iih and asked the agitators to instead end the protest, abide by the law and not create hassles for those working as per the law.

Reiterating his stand on street vendors, Shah stated that such businesses were illegal and that allowing such businesses to run during dedicated time slots was also not viable.

"Emotions could make us sympathise with the vendors but by law, they are nothing but illegal," he



lih had staged a hunger strike in 2020.

wrote on Facebook. "Children, visually-impaired, pregnant women, and those suffering from other illnesses will have to use the pathways during the two hours, in the morning and the evening, as well. Moreover, it isn't that no untoward incidents will take place during that time period. Such street vendors will obstruct the way during such emergency

Shah added that more than 20 percent of the calls, around 1000, made to the city's call centres in the last one year have been regarding the removal of street vendors.

As far as the proposal to use some open spaces to allow street vendors to operate their businesses is concerned, not just the mayor, but even the prime minister and the Cabinet cannot give such permission, the statement further reads

To let street vendors continue with their businesses in the spaces would be an injustice to those who were displaced and whose homes were demolished to clear the space, and a violation of the law which mentions that such spaces cannot be used for purposes other than what they were acquired for, the statement further read

"You must have understood that we do not have the right to fulfil your demand on such grounds,' the mayor wrote.

The mayor also stated that leaders supporting the demonstration were being politically dishonest. "As far as the support and calls to fulfil the demands from [politicians] KP Sharma Oli, Baburam Bhattarai, Kamal Thapa, Gagan Thapa, Swarnim Wagle, and others are concerned, we only sense political dishonesty," Shah wrote. "They are in the position to make rules, but have they made

clear rules regarding the issue?" The mayor went on, "I have not forgotten my electoral agenda, and won't do so either. The KMC will always be there to be the voice of the

## Nepal's debt servicing cost rose by over 80 percent last fiscal year

Allocated amount for debt servicing in current fiscal is more than the capital spending allocation.

☐ PRITHVI MAN SHRESTHA

The government's spending on debt servicing nearly doubled last fiscal year amid Nepal's ballooning public debt along with high interest rates applicable on internal

The government spent Rs222.74 billion in debt servicing, including principal repayment and interest, in the fiscal year 2022-23. The figure is a rise of around 83 percent from the previous fiscal year, according to the Public Debt Management Office (PDMO). The spending under the heading was Rs121.99 billion in the fiscal year

In the fiscal 2020-21, the government spent Rs95 billion in debt servicing.

The PDMO said in its Annual Report 2022-23 that a massive rise in interests to be paid to domestic creditors contributed mainly to the surge in overall debt spending.

Of the total interest of Rs72.78 billion paid last fiscal year, Rs64.51 billion went against domestic debt alone, according to

The liquidity crunch in the banking system in much of the last fiscal year pushed interest rates up.

Interest rates that banks and financial institutions charge on individuals and businesses, as well as the rates that the government offered for its debt instruments such as treasury bills, development bonds, citizen saving bonds and foreign employment bonds, rose sharply. According to the report,

the average interest rate of treasury bills grew to 7.23 percent in the last fiscal year 2022-23, from 5.82 percent in the preceding fiscal. The average interest of development bonds, which account for around 55 percent of outstanding internal loans, stood at 8.64 percent in the last year from 7.74 fiscal percent in the previous fiscal. Even though the size

of domestic loans is smaller than foreign debts, the share of domestic

finance is higher because of the costlier interest rates, the PDMO said in its annual

In the last fiscal, the country's total outstanding domestic debt was Rs1,129 billion and external debt Rs1170.24 billion.

"The government is spending over four percent of the GDP in debt servicing, which is alarmingly high," said Nara Bahadur Thapa, former executive director of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB). The debt expenditure is considered normal if it is less than two percent of the GDP. Nepal's GDP in the fiscal year 2022-22 stood at Rs5,381.33 billion.

He said the high debt cost means the government will have little budget for health, education, and nutrition, among others. "It affects the social sector and human development," he added.

As debt servicing is a compulsory liability of the government, it must do that even by cutting the budget of other sectors. Dilaram Giri, information officer at the PDMO, said his office received an extra Rs22 billion last fiscal year from the finance ministry from an initial allocation to pay the

The government has significantly

increased the allocation for debt servicing in the current fiscal year.

According to the budget for the fiscal year 2023-24, the government will be spending as much as Rs330.55 billion in repaying loans, more than the capital budget.

The government has allocated Rs302 billion for capital spending. The amount for debt servicing accounts for 26.47 percent of the total projected revenue collection of Rs1249 billion in the current fiscal

"Paying over a quarter of total revenue for debt servicing should be considered alarming," said Thapa, the former central bank official.

As large amounts of internal loans will mature in the current fiscal year, the gov ernment had to allocate a vast amount for repayments, according to Giri. "The liability would be even more if the treasury bills are not rolled over for an additional period after maturity," he added.

The budget allocates Rs275.78 billion for repaying domestic loans—both principal

According to the finance ministry, the government will spend as much as Rs93.23 billion for repaying the interest on internal loans in the current fiscal year while Rs182.55 billion has been set aside for principal payment.

100 Natural 100 Protection

Nepal started to take large loans from domestic and external creditors after the country had to undertake post-earthquake reconstruction work starting with the fiscal 2015-16. Subsequent borrowing for

spending to control the Covid pandemic increased the debt burden. By the end of last fiscal year, the country's total outstanding debt stood at Rs2,299.35 billion, or 42.73 percent of the GDP, according to the PDMO. International

Nepal report issued in May that Nepal's external and overall debt remains at low risk of distress, according to its debt sustainability analysis. But, it has called for seeking more concessional financing and enhancing debt management to reduce the financing

Monetary Fund said in its

## Resumption of trilateral summit first step towards mending South Korea-China ties

The summit, last held in December 2019, was suspended following a dispute between South Korea and Japan over forced labour compensation rulings and the pandemic.

Senior diplomats from China, Japan and South Korea have agreed that their leaders should meet at the "earliest convenient time", in what is viewed as a positive step towards defrosting ties between Beijing and Seoul.

South Korea's Deputy Foreign Minister Chung Byung-won discussed the resumption of the trilateral summit with Japan's Senior Deputy Foreign Minister Takehiro Funakoshi and China's Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs Nong Rong in a fourhour meeting in Seoul on Tuesday.

No dates were specified, but they agreed that their foreign ministers would "promptly convene" a meeting to prepare for the summit, according to South Korea's Ministry of Foreign

Seoul also proposed six key areas of focus for the potential summit, including cooperation in people-to-people exchanges, science and technology, and security. The summit was last held in

December 2019 in Chengdu, after which it was suspended following a dispute between South Korea and Japan over forced labour compensation rulings and the Covid-19 pandemic. South Korea is hoping to score a

diplomatic coup by reviving the summit - which would involve Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida - and subsequently hosting a state visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Xi reportedly told South Korea's Prime Minister Han Duck-soo during a meeting in Hangzhou last weekend that he would "seriously consider" a visit to Seoul.

The visit - Xi's first to South Korea since 2014 – would be a "turning point in Korea-China relations", said South Korea's National Security Adviser Cho Tae-young. It is also expected to officially end the dispute between the two countries over South Korea's deployment of an American anti-missile shield in 2017.

Sceptical observers, however, question if China will exert pressure on South Korea and demand certain con-

cessions in exchange for Xi's visit. Just months ago in May, China had warned that bilateral cooperation

would be impossible if South Korea touches its core interests such as the "one China" principle, or if South Korea moves toward a pro-United States, pro-Japan, unilateral foreign

Ties have been strained since South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol, who took office in May 2022, moved to align more closely with security ally US. In May, he ruffled feathers in Beijing when he appeared to dismiss the "one China" principle in an interview ahead of his state visit to Washington.

In August, China called a US-Japan-South Korea summit held at Camp David a "hypocritical anti-China pantomime" and accused the three countries of forming a "mini-Nato".

China Foreign Minister Wang Yi, in a phone exchange with his South Korean counterpart Park Jin in late August, hinted that their nations' bilateral relations should not be influenced by a third party.



He expressed hope that South Korea will reject anti-globalisation manoeuvres and attempts to decouple or sever

industrial and supply chains. Even if differences remain, analysts said the trilateral summit would still be a good first step in the warming of ties between South Korea and China.

Sogang University political science professor Kim Jae-chun said there will be no dramatic turnaround in bilateral relations. The earlier tensions were due to both Xi and Yoon "overplaying their hands" and it is now in their mutual interests to mend fences, he

Yoon got the ball rolling earlier in September during a Cabinet meeting, when he committed to reviving and hosting the trilateral summit with Japan and China by the end of 2023.

While bilateral meetings would be trickier to conduct in the current atmosphere of mistrust, Prof Kim said the trilateral summit provides a good

starting point. If trilateral discussions go well, then it paves the way for South Korea and China to move things forward bilaterally. "It is a step that you need to take

because you can't just let it be," he said. "You have got to do something to rescue the relationship. So, I think the smartest way is to utilise this trilateral summit to do so."

Seoul National University law professor Lee Jae-min sees the trilateral summit as an effective and productive platform for the three neighbouring countries with such close economic ties to come together to discuss the many intersecting bilateral issues.

"The problems are so complicated historically, culturally, economically and militarily. On some issues, they have very different views. But at least if they can meet, then they can discuss some of the issues instead of not talking to each other at all," he told ST.

Both do not believe that China expects South Korea - or Japan, for that matter - to concede their existing alliance with the US in any way. Prof Lee said: "China now under-

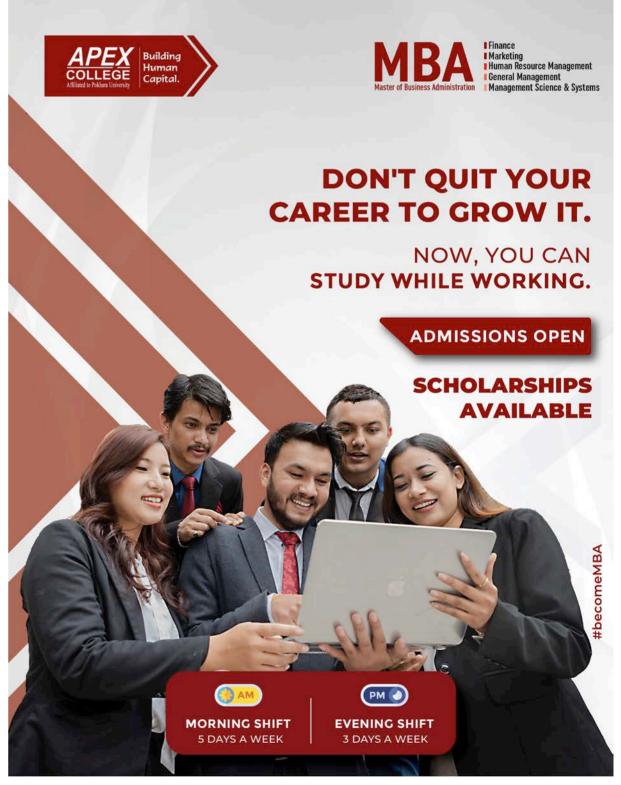
stands what Korea can do with respect to some sensitive issues, including global supply chain issues, or semiconductors, and its commitments made at the Camp David trilateral summit."

He believes that within those boundaries still lie "many things that Korea can cooperate with China, and China can cooperate with Korea"

But one area of cooperation that may not work out would be North Korea. China has so far maintained its distance from the recent cosying of ties between North Korea and Russia, following a rare summit between North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier in September.

Prof Kim said: "The strategic value of North Korea looms larger than before. But you don't want to estrange North Korea or put too much pressure on it into giving up nuclear weapons. I think that is the reason China has pretty much given the 'okay' sign to North

Korea's missile provocations. "I don't think China will exercise its leverage on North Korea. I don't even know whether China has that leverage because North Korea doesn't listen.'



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### **OPINION**



### Dahal in China

The PM did not compromise on Nepal's core interests. But he didn't secure major concessions either.

That Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal will claim to have taken Nepal-China relations to newer heights upon his arrival at the Tribhuvan International Airport is a ritual all too familiar to Nepalis. The 13-point joint statement released Wednesday, before Dahal left for Tibet en route to Nepal, is diplomatic sweet talk for the most part. In the first six points of the statement, the two sides have just reminded each other of the historical relationship, congratulated one another where deemed appropriate, and vowed to deepen the relations further by accommodating each other's concerns. As expected, Nepal expressed its firm commitment to the one-China principle and Taiwanese independence while failing to extract a similar commitment from the Chinese side on Nepal's concerns as Dahal failed to take up the controversial new Chinese map that undermines Nepal's territorial integrity.

From the seventh point upwards, though, there are some substantial, if not pathbreaking, commitments. These include the reopening of border points, solidifying the Belt and Road Initiative cooperation, and the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network, among others. The countries have agreed to continue working toward finalising the China-Nepal Electric Power Cooperation Plan and cooperate in hydropower, wind power, solar power, biomass power and hydrogen. The two sides have also agreed to complete the Kathmandu Ring Road project, cooperate in developing hydropower and transmission lines and expand air rights arrangements.

What is conspicuously missing, though, is any word on converting the loan for Pokhara International Airport into a grant, something Dahal desperately wanted from the Chinese this time. This is one area where Dahal could have shined and relieved the country of the huge financial liability caused by the construction of the airport. It's a missed opportunity. Instead, Dahal agreed to give continuity to the feasibility of the Jilong/Keyrung-Kathmandu Cross-Border Railway, which runs the risk of turning into another white elephant. That seems to leave Dahal with nothing much to talk about except, perhaps, water buffaloes once again, as he did with India in May-June. Apart from the export of cooked buffalo meat products and citrus fruits from Nepal to China, expected to reduce the existing trade imbalance, the two countries have also agreed to cooperate on the variety breeding of Yak, Nak and mountain goats, which could help uplift the economic status of the people living the Himalayan region.

To his credit, Dahal has not given much fodder to Nepali foreign policy pundits waiting for him to fumble. To his credit, Dahal has coyed away from signing two of Chinese President Xi Jinping's doctrines of the Global Security Initiative and the Global Cultural Initiative. He has, however, decided to support the Global Development Initiative, a solid balancing act, as he does not want to be seen as favouring one bloc over another in international security initiatives while he does not want to burn bridges as well.

All in all, the whole visit smacked more of ritualism than substance. That Nepalis have to consider the prime minister not compromising on Nepal's core interests as a measure of success speaks of the low bar of our modern-day diplomacy.

### THEIR VIEW

## Stop price control

If the government insists on setting prices, then it must do the bare minimum of ensuring compliance.

With prices of essential goods long having spiralled out of the reach of ordinary people, we are frustrated that the government's approach to stabilise the market continues to be short-sighted and ineffective. On September 15, the government fixed the prices of eggs, onions and potatoes as part of a bid to contain the runaway food inflation (which hit a 12-year high in August). But according to our report, none of these items are being sold at the set prices. This comes as no surprise to us—and it shouldn't to the authorities either—as the government's past attempts at price control have repeatedly fallen short of expectations, providing financial windfalls to market syndicates instead.

For instance, every year, the government fixes rawhide prices ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, and every year without exception, traders violate that cap, citing various reasons. In the agriculture sector, too, farmers inevitably end up paying more than government-set fertilizer prices. Meanwhile, LPG cylinders, fixed at Tk 1,284, are currently selling at Tk 1,600. Whether it's the transportation fares, dollar rates, or prices of soybean oil, sugar or IV saline, the story is much the same, with the only ones to have benefitted in the process being the traders.

Why must the government insist on this charade year after year instead of addressing the root causes of escalating prices? Who is it really making a mockery of—its own institutions, whose failure to monitor the market is markedly clear, or the people, whose suffering has increased manifold over the past one and a

Echoing the advice of economists, we have written countless times over the past year(s) advocating a different approach—to take stern action against the syndicates that are monopolising the market and manipulating prices. Yet, for reasons best known to the authorities, they have refused to monitor and regulate the major players who dominate supply chains and engage in monopolistic practices. Over and over, big players, with friends in powerful positions, have won over ordinary people, who have no one to look out for them

Ahead of the upcoming general elections, the government must take a hard look at its present policies and consistent failure to bring down food prices, and ease people's sufferings. If it insists on setting prices, then it must do the bare minimum of ensuring compliance. But beyond, it is painfully obvious that it needs to ensure a transparent and competitive marketplace to pave the way for efficient market performance.

— The Daily Star (Bangladesh)/ANN

## Geopolitics dominates Maldives election

|| NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ||

Maldives will remain crucial for countries with a deep interest in the Indian Ocean.

SMRUTI S PATTANAIK



Maldives saw the first round of the presidential election on September 9 in which 282,000 people voted. Out of the eight presidential candidates, none received the mandatory 50 percent of the votes to be declared elected. So a runoff election has been scheduled for September 30 between the two top contenders-Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, the incumbent president from the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), and his rival, mayor of Malé, Mohamed Muizzu from the People's National Congress (PNC). Muizzu was nominated by its alliance partner Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) which is headed by former president Abdulla Yameen who is currently in jail and was disqualified to contest the election. Muizzu received 46 percent of the votes and Solih received 39 percent. The election is being seen as a geopolitical contest between India and China. Solih and Muizzu are seen as being close to them respectively

Since the dawn of democracy in 2008, this island nation has become a ground for contest between external powers for influence given its geostrategic location. Especially after the announcement of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and maritime Silk Route which coincided with Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Maldives and the opening of the Chinese Embassy there, the island nation has attracted international attention. During the last election held in 2018, the main theme was the Chinese debt burden. In the 2023 election, a campaign against India has been launched by PPM.

Anti-India campaign Maldives has always adopted an India

first policy in its various pronounce-



OUTSALTINES

ments. Even though Abdulla Yameen followed in the footsteps of president Mohamed Waheed who developed close relations with China, he publicly maintained an India first policy while doing everything to undermine India's interest. Since 2018, the PPM has made anti-India rhetoric its mainstay in politics to exert control over the administration and project itself as the only party that can protect the sovereignty and security of Maldives.

The opposition is harping on the presence of Indian troops—the 75 trainers stationed to maintain and operate two helicopters and Dornier aircraft on Maldives soil—and has loss of sovereignty under President Solih when, in 2021, Maldives and India signed an agreement to develop a dockyard and harbour in Uthuru Thilafalhu. In 2020, the United States signed a framework agreement on defence and security cooperation with Maldives. India-Maldives defence cooperation had expired in 2018 during Yameen's regime as he had ordered India to take back two choppers that India had gifted in 2013.

As China expanded its presence, Yameen's government saw an opportunity in courting China for investment and a strategic ally as he started persecuting the opposition and filled the judiciary with his supporters. Since 2018, the relationship between Yameen and India has soured while his relationship with China has soared. Yameen passed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with China without its being debated in Parliament. He also passed a land acquisition law through Parliament under which foreigners can get land if they invest \$1 billion and 70 percent of such land has been reclaimed from the sea. The law is believed to have been adopted to favour China.

Therefore, it was not surprising that the 2018 election was fought based on Maldives' indebtedness to China, massive corruption and the undermining of institutions by Yameen. Solih won the election after receiving more than 58 percent of the votes. Solih's election created a hope for stable bilateral relations and an expectation that Maldives would be conscious of India's security concerns. Prime Minister Modi attended the oath taking ceremony. India announced a \$1.4 billion credit line to help Maldives overcome its financial distress.

Unfortunately, the deep divide within the party between incumbent

President Solih and former president Nasheed has emerged as a major challenge. The difference between the two manifested itself when Solih won the primary that clinched his candidature as the party's presidential candidate. The breaking point came when a no-confidence motion was brought against Nasheed who is the speaker accusing him of engaging in favouritism and delaying taking a decision. This was only withdrawn on September 11 after it became apparent that Solih had to fight a second round.

In June 2023, these differences resulted in 12 members of the MDP, including Nasheed, leaving to form a new party known as the Democrats Party whose candidate got only 7.18 percent of the votes. Nasheed has been demanding a transition to a parliamentary system of government that will empower Parliament by organising a referendum.

#### Final round

As the final round to elect the president approaches, there is a fervent move to reach permutation and combination of political forces. For the MDP, the main challenge is not only to get crucial support from Nasheed's party; but also the support of other parties who fought the first round. Jumhooree Party leader Qasim Ibrahim has pledged his support to Solih on the precondition that he will eliminate foreign influence and establish equitable bilateral ties without leaning towards one side

In a meeting between Solih and Nasheed on September 24, Nasheed said he continues to support Ilyas Labeeb, the presidential candidate of his party citing the Maldivian constitution which says that if the candidate who receives the second largest number of votes withdraws; the candidate with the third largest number of votes can enter the fray.

Though it is highly unexpected that Solih will withdraw from the race, it remains to be seen whether Nasheed's supporters will vote for Muizzu—the candidate with the highest number of votes. The number of Maldivian voters living abroad has doubled for the second round of the election. With hectic campaigning both candidates are now focussing on domestic issues. Whatever the result, Maldives will remain geopolitically crucial for countries having a deep interest in the Indian Ocean, and India certainly will watch the election closely.

## Evidence-based policymaking in Nepal

Many developing countries have yet to enhance their policy formulation and implementation capacity.

HARI SHARMA



The growth trajectory of a country is guided by the policies it prepares and implements to meet the expectations of people, the vision of political parties and the expertise of bureaucracy. It should primarily be based on factual data and identified problems of a particular sector. Evidence-based policymaking is accepted based on research findings and the development of the targeted sector. Developed countries are way ahead in policymaking while developing and least-developed countries are yet to enhance their capacity.

of the country bears widespread criticism as "making policies in aggression and implementing them in regression".

Evidence-based policymaking

Evidence-based policymaking in Nepal is still in its infancy and has yet to materialise its efforts. On the one hand, data availability is significantly lower; on the other, capacity constraints in policymaking are prevalent. The systemic culture of push and pull of research for policy-making has not developed yet, given the unsatisfactory status of research and development.

We have a few research institutions, including Policy Research Institute, Nepal Academy of Science and Technology, Nepal Agricultural Research Council, Institute of Foreign Affairs, Nepal Health Research Council and academic institutions. However, there is a need for coherence in their findings and policy formulations. Additionally, these institutions are suffering from institutional capacity constraints. Nepal also lacks an apex research body that coordinates with the three tiers of government in research and development, including vertical and horizontal cross-cutting issues.

tiers of government, the policies should be informed by up-to-date facts and figures that reflect the image and development trajectory of the ground reality. Simply put, a greater emphasis on demand-driven policymaking rather than a supply-led approach should be prioritised as it reveals the true demand of the targeted sector where policy intervention is needed.

Room for improvement

The institutional capacity of policymaking bodies exhibits a massive room for improvement, be it at the federal, provincial, or local levels. In Nepal, the National Planning Commission at the federal level prepares periodic plans, and the provincial level has provincial planning commissions. At the local level, there are local planning units. Though the National Planning Commission has been active since 1956, provincial and local planning bodies have been operating only after 2017 with the first elections of three tiers of governments in the federal set-up. The provinces and local planning bodies are yet to develop their full capacity. Besides, the federal and provincial sectoral ministries involved in sectoral 16th, but a pleasing picture of results delivery is yet to be found. For a plan to succeed in Nepal, there should be strong inter-linkage between the annual budget, the medium term expenditure framework and periodic plans. The problem seen in federal-level planning and budgeting is also reflected in provincial and local levels. The commitment Goals (SDGs) by 2030 necessitates properly internalising SDGs into our planning and budgeting process. The linkage should be established through facts and figures rather than sweet-sounding jargon. The pork-barrelling prevalent during budget preparations at all three levels of government has aggravated Nepal's evidence-based policy making ecosystem.

Unfortunately, the practice of policy review is almost nonexistent in Nepal. Policies are rarely based on past experiences and learning; instead, they are sudden expressions of short-term needs. Periodic review and policy evaluation are essential to evidence-based policymaking because feedback can improve policy.

### Learning from Sweden

An excellent example of evidence-based policymaking is Sweden's Vision Zero Initiative. The initiative started in 1997 to address the issues of traffic accidents in the country and successfully minimise them. Following its triumph, Europe and other countries adopted it. yielding astounding results in traffic safety. The success emanates from an evidence-based policy-making process with comprehensive data collection related to traffic accidents. The initiative analyses high-risk areas and situations based on available data and carries out targeted interventions, including road designs, strict traffic regulations, launching awareness campaigns, etc. A continuous evaluation system of the targeted intervention eventually leads to adaptation and improvement. The Vision Zero Initiative takes evidence as the foundation of targeted interventions.

Nepal's policy-making process should be enhanced by giving voice to data rather than lofty words. Evidence-based policymaking should be a departure point for Nepal's strategic journey, boosting the research and development culture in the government tiers. Other governance stakeholders, including the private sector, should equally prioritise and invest in research and development. The more the segregated data is received, the easier it is for strategic intervention in the targeted sector, which contributes to the overall development agenda of Nepal.

Sharma is an undersecretary at the Government of Nepal.



Policymaking in Nepal is plagued by the tendency of policymakers to make hasty and ambitious policies but fail to implement them. While facts, figures and findings are the mainstay of effective policies, Nepal lacks sufficient grassroots evidence for policy formulation. This remains the main hindrance to creating and implementing evidence-based policy in Nepal. As a result, the entire policymaking process

Most research institutions in Nepal were established before the country embraced federalism in 2015. So, it is necessary to envisage and develop institutions that focus on research at the provincial and local levels. If the planning and policymaking of provincial and local levels are not coordinated with the federal level, achieving development goals would be a far cry. Aside from harmonisation among the three

policy-making also struggle with institutional constraints. The human capital engaged in planning and policy-making processes is more generalist than sector-specific experts. Even though consultation and participation of stakeholders is an essential aspect of Nepal's policy-making process, it seems cosmetic rather than meaningful.

Nepal is nearing the end of its 15th periodic plan and on the verge of the

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**FOREX** 

**US Dollar** 

Pound Sterling

Australian Dolla

Canadian Dollar

Singapore Dollar

Japanese Yen (10)

Chinese Yuan

Qatari Riyal

Thai Bhat

**UAE Dhiram** 

Malaysian Ringit

Korean Won (100)

Nepse (in perce

**BULLION** 

BIZLINE

Standard Chartered Bank

Nepal joins hands with AEPC

KATHMANDU: Standard Chartered

Bank Nepal Limited (SCBNL) has

Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC) Central Renewable Energy Fund (CREF) for Loan Loss Guarantee under Sustainable Energy Challenge

Fund for financing in Renewable Energy sectors. The arrangement is expected to scale up renewable ener-

Guarantee also is expected to ease collateral requirements while obtaining loan for Sustainable initiatives

gy financing in the country. Loan loss

reads the press release issued by the

company, Globally, Standard

Chartered Bank is committed to

of sustainable finance, with plans

to mobilise \$300 billion in green

of this decade. (PR)

over fuel price rise

and transition finance by the end

Russia's Putin urges action

Putin urged the government to

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir

respond "more promptly" to rising

fuel prices on Wednesday, as the cost

despite an export ban. Russia's gov-

ernment announced last week it was

temporarily limiting exports of pet-

rol and diesel fuel to "stabilise" the

shortages in some regions. "We will

count on the fact that the proposed

measures work," Putin said, calling

closely with oil companies to lower

on the government to work more

prices. "We must treat them with

care, but nevertheless, I would ask

you to react more promptly to the

events that are happening," Putin

told members of his cabinet. After

recovering from a record high last

week, the market price of Russian

petrol ticked up again on Tuesday

India tax department searches

offices of Apple supplier Flex **NEW DELHI:** India's income tax department conducted searches

at the premises of Apple supplier Flex in Tamil Nadu state, a source said on Wednesday. Income tax officials have visited the Chennai

factory as part of the inquiry, the source said, adding that Flex has yet to be informed about the purpose

department did not immediately

respond to a Reuters' request for

US durable goods orders

unexpectedly rise in August

regained some momentum after

faltering early in the third quarter.

The Commerce Department said on

Wednesday that orders for durable

goods, items ranging from toasters to

aircraft meant to last three years or

more, gained 0.2 percent last month.

show orders for these goods decreas-

ing 5.6 percent instead of 5.2 percent

Data for July was revised lower to

as previously reported. (REUTERS)

**WASHINGTON:** Orders for long-lasting

rose in August and there were signs

US manufactured goods unexpectedly

that business spending on equipment

of the visit. The income tax

comment. (REUTERS)

despite the export ban. (AFP)

domestic market, amid reports of

of wholesale petrol continued to grow

expanding the scale and reach

signed an agreement with Alternative

**SHARES** 

MODERATE LOSERS

Saudi Arab Riyal

Swiss Franc

### MONEY

## Nepal's FDI stock rose 16 percent to Rs264.3 billion

In terms of total FDI stock, India ranks top with Rs88.6 billion, followed by China with Rs33.4 billion, according to the report released by the central bank.

Nepal's foreign direct investment (FDI) stock rose 16 percent to Rs264.3 billion at the end of the fiscal year 2021-22, according to a new survey report.

The Survey Report on FDI in Nepal (2021-22) published by Nepal Rastra Bank, the country's central bank, on Wednesday, shows that in terms of total FDI stock, India ranks top with Rs88.6 billion, followed by China (Rs33.4 billion), Ireland (Rs20.9 billion), Singapore (Rs16.1 billion), and Saint Kitts and Nevis (Rs15.1 billion).

The survey has covered 231 companies-93.8 percent of large-size companies, 88.2 percent of medium-sized companies and 25.5 percent of small-

The FDI stocks measure the total level of direct investment at a given point in time, usually at the end of a quarter or of a year.

The report said that the paid-up capital is the major component in FDI stock accounting for 53.7 percent. The reserves and loans account for 31.7 percent and 14.6 percent respectively in total FDI stock.

Nepal has received foreign investment from 57 different countries as of mid-July 2022.

The industrial sector accounts for 62.6 percent of total FDI stock. Of which, the electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning sector constitutes 32.8 percent and the manufacturing sector 29.5 percent of total FDI stock.

The report said that about 37.3 percent of total FDI stock is in the service sector. Of which, the financial and insurance services sector constitutes 25.6 percent, the accommodation and food services sector 5.3 percent, and the information and communication sector 4.8 percent of the total FDI

The electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning sector, particularly the hydropower sector, in Nepal, has been a preferred sector for FDI in

The latest survey shows that 32.8 percent of FDI stock and 41.8 percent of total paid-up capital is in this

Moreover, the hydropower sector



The FDI stocks measure the total level of direct investment at a given point in time, usually at the end of a quarter or of a year.

has also attracted other sources of external financing such as foreign loans in addition to FDI; the electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning sector accounts for 41.4 percent of outstanding foreign loans at the end

The capacity utilisation of FDIbased manufacturing companies stands at 71.1 percent, while the profitability of FDI companies remains at 14.3 percent in the review year, the

The electricity, gas, steam, and air conditioning sectors have the highest FDI stock of Rs86.8 billion (32.8 percent of the total) followed by the manufacturing sector (Rs77.9 billion) and financial and insurance services sector (Rs67.8 billion).

In line with the global trend, gross

FDI inflows decreased by 3.5 percent to Rs19.2 billion in 2021-22, according to the survey report. The divestment of foreign invest-

ment (repatriation of investment)

during 2021-22 remained at Rs658.7 million which is around 3.4 percent of gross FDI inflows. Net FDI inflows to Nepal decreased 4.9 percent to Rs18.6 billion in 2021-22.

There is a significant gap between approved FDI and actual net FDI inflows in Nepal.

Between 1995-96 and 2021-22, the total actual net FDI inflow stood at around 36.2 percent of total FDI approval. The FDI approval may simply indicate an intended investment (the approved investment may not actually take place) or there may be a significant time lag between approval and actual investments, the central bank said.

In some instances, the realisation of the approved investment may take place over several years as usually seen in projects with longer gestation periods. As a result, there exists a gap between FDI approval and actual FDI inflows, the report said. In 2021-22, Rs.15.7 billion was

approved for dividend repatriation by companies with foreign investment. The highest dividend repatriation approval was for the manufacturing sector followed by the information and communication sector. The FDI stock of transport and stor-

age decreased due to the significant decline in the reserve position of the companies within the sector.

In terms of paid-up capital, India

### Nepal, Malaysian firm sign MoU to prepare feasibility study for plant

KATHMANDU: Investment Board Nepal and Malaysia-based reNIKOLA Sdn Bhd, on Wednesday, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to prepare the detailed feasibility study report for the establishment of a green calcium ammonium nitrate fertiliser plant in Nepal.

Sushil Bhatta, chief executive officer of Investment Board Nepal and Boumhidi Abdelali, managing director of reNIKOLA Sdn Bhd signed the MoU on behalf of their respective organisations.

proposed project Abukhaireni, Tanahun is estimated to cost \$260 million, which will produce 95,600 tonnes of green ammonia and 286,975 tonnes of green calcium ammonium nitrate annually. (PR)

also ranked first with Rs53.4 billion followed by China (Rs24.3 billion), South Korea (Rs10.5 billion), and Ireland (Rs9 billion).

According to the report, as of mid-July 2022, the outstanding foreign loans (excluding direct loans from foreign direct investors) of FDI companies stood at Rs68.7 billion. Such loans were Rs40.7 billion a year ago. The companies in the hydropower sector have utilised more foreign loans as the outstanding loans of this sector stood at Rs28.4 billion in mid-July 2022.

The survey also includes data on sales from the operation of FDI companies.

The total sales of surveyed companies during 2021-22 stood at Rs445.4 billion which was Rs381.5 billion a

Similarly, the average return on equity of surveyed FDI companies stood at about 14.3 percent for 2021-22, which was around 14.7 percent a

## Canada's lentil sales to India slow

■ REUTERS

Canadian lentil sales to India have slowed since Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said last week he suspected India of involvement in an assassination on Canadian soil, fearing reprisal from New Delhi that could limit trade, industry sources in both countries say.

Trudeau said that Canada was "actively pursuing credible allegations" linking Indian government tist leader in British Columbia in June. India's foreign ministry called the allegations "absurd."

Canada is India's main import source of lentils, a protein-rich staple used to make daal curry.

Reduced Indian purchases would likely cut the prices Canadian farmers receive during harvest. But such a move could also inflate India's domestic food prices, which would be politically risky ahead of a national elec-

After a drop in output, India banned wheat exports last year, followed by a ban on non-basmati white rice this year to preserve supplies of those

"Industry officials are concerned that there could be trade restrictions by the governments owing to current tensions between the countries," said Nitin Gupta, senior vice president of Olam Agri India, a major importer.

There are no such plans by India and Delhi has not instructed importers to refrain from purchases, said a senior Indian government official,



A file photo shows price tags on the samples of rice and lentils that are kept on display for sale at a wholesale market in the old quarters of Delhi, India.

declining to be named due to the sensitivity of the situation.

The Indian government has suspended issuing visas to Canadians and each country has expelled some diplomats

Canada is not currently taking any

action that would directly affect trade with India, said an official with the Canadian Global Affairs department, declining to be named. Indian buyers bought significant

supplies of Canadian lentils earlier in the year for delivery after harvest, said Kevin Price, senior export merchant at Winnipeg-based crop trader Parrish & Heimbecker.

"Obviously we're concerned about making sure [the sales] get executed," Price said, adding that he's not aware

of any cancellations. "Do they want to take on more now? No. They're taking a wait-and-see" attitude.

Due to India's poor crop, lentil pric-

es are high, but since Trudeau's comments Indian offers for Canadian supplies have dropped 6 percent to around \$770 per metric ton, Price said. A second Canadian exporter said

while Indian buyers have become hesitant, overall global demand for lentils remains strong.

Canada was the biggest supplier of lentils to India during India's 2022/23 financial year ended on March 31 with shipments of 485,492 metric tons worth \$370 million, accounting for more than half of India's total lentil imports, according to data from India's trade ministry

## Britain approves new North Sea oil drilling

ASSOCIATED PRESS

British regulators on Wednesday approved new oil and gas drilling at a site in the North Sea, a move environmentalists say will hurt the country's attempt to meet its climate goals.

The UK's North Sea Transition Authority said it had approved the Field Development Plan "which allows the owners to proceed with their project."

Britain's Conservative government argues that drilling in the Rosebank field, northwest of the Shetland Islands, will create jobs and bolster the UK's energy security.

One of the largest untapped deposits in UK waters, Rosebank holds an estimated 350 million barrels

The field is operated by Norway's Equinor and the UK firm Ithaca Energy, which say they plan to invest \$3.8 billion in the first phase of the project. The field is expected to start producing in 2026-2027.

Green Party lawmaker Caroline Lucas called the decision to approve drilling "morally obscene.

"Energy security and cheaper bills aren't delivered by allowing highly subsidised, foreign-owned fossil fuel giants to extract more oil and gas from these islands and sell it overseas to the highest bidder," she said.

The government argues that Rosebank and other new projects will Critics say it's the latest climate U-turn by **Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservative** government.

be "significantly less emissions intensive than previous developments." It says continuing to extract the

North Sea's dwindling oil and gas reserves "is important for maintaining domestic security of supply and making the UK less vulnerable to a repeat of the energy crisis that caused prices to soar after Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine."

Critics say it's the latest climate U-turn by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservative government. Last week Sunak announced a fiveyear delay, until 2035, on banning new gasoline and diesel cars.

The government says it still aims to reduce the UK's carbon emissions to net zero by 2050.

Energy Secretary Claire Coutinho said the UK was committed to investing in renewable energy, but "we will need oil and gas as part of that mix on the path to net zero and so it makes sense to use our own supplies from North Sea fields such as

## Fire traced to workers' failure to turn off switch

**□** REUTERS

CHENGALPATTU, SEPT 27

A factory fire at iPhone assembler Pegatron India was sparked by a short-circuit after an electrical switch was left on, following testing of the devices as they were being put together, two sources briefed on the matter told Reuters.

The lapse at key Apple supplier Pegatron's only factory in India, located in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, cost two straight days of lost production.

After Reuters sent queries to Pegatron for this report, the firm told the Taiwan stock exchange on Wednesday that "a small switchboard experienced an accident" at the factory on Sunday.

A spokesperson late on Wednesday said production had restarted.

In a statement on Monday, Pegatron said there were no injuries in the fire, which it described as a "spark incident" whose cause would be determined. After putting together about 70 iPhone parts, workers at the Pegatron plant usually charge the device batteries up to a level of 50 percent at a charging rack, before installing software, the state government source said.

However, a switch on one such rack was not turned off after the end of Saturday's shifts, the source added, causing overheating and eventually a spark that set alight a foam sheet used to protect new mobile phones against scratches.

One smartphone industry source with direct knowledge said the charging racks at the Pegatron plant are typically switched off after three Saturday shifts end early on Sundays.

## Egypt aims to attract 30 million tourists

Egypt is seeking to double the number of visitors to the country in the next five years, its top tourism official told The Associated Press.

Egypt is aiming at reaching 30 million visitors by 2028, as its once-thriving tourism sector recovers from the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic and the grinding war in Europe following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Tourism and Antiquities Minister Ahmed Issa said on Tuesday.

"We're seeing unparalleled demand, unprecedented demand for travel into Egypt," Issa said in an interview.

He said Egypt had received 10 million tourists in the first eight months of 2023, and was "well on track to achieve around 15 million this year, which is going to be a record year for the tourism industry."

The sector is a major source of foreign currency for the cash-strapped North African country. Last year,



Hundreds of tourists watch and film antiquities at a museum in Cairo, Egypt on Wednesday.

tourism revenues surged to \$10.7 billion, up from around \$5 billion in 2021, according to the Egyptian cen-

The government's plan focuses on what he calls the "supply side," which includes increasing the number of

hotel rooms in the country and seats on flights to Egypt by more than 30 percent annually, as well as encouraging more private investment in the tourism sector. Issa said they would add 25,000 hotel rooms to Egypt's current capacity of about 210,000

#### BRIEFING

#### China accuses Taiwan of using economic and trade issues to seek independence

**BEIJING:** The Chinese government on Wednesday accused Taiwan's ruling party of seeking independence, a day after the self-governing island's president lobbied for Australia's support in joining a regional trade pact. Zhu Fenglian, spokesperson for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, also said the recent Chinese military drills around Taiwan were held to combat "the arrogance of Taiwan independence separatist forces." China claims Taiwan, an island about 160 kilo metres off its east coast, as its territory. The two split during the civil war that brought the Communists to power in China in 1949, with the losing Nationalists setting up their own government in Taiwan. Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen, meeting with six visiting Australian lawmakers on Tuesday, sought their country's support for Taiwan's bid to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, an 11-nation free trade agreement. The Australian parlia mentary delegation discussed strengthening economic cooperation with Taiwan, particularly in clean energy, and expressed an interest in Taiwan's semiconductor industry. Zhu said that any participation by Taiwan in a regional economic group ing should be handled in accordance with the "one-China principle," which holds that the Communist Party is the government of China and Taiwan is a part of the country.

#### Iraq wedding fire kills over 100, relatives identify bodies

**MOSUL:** A fire ripped through a packed wedding hall in northern Iraq late on Tuesday, killing more than 100 people in a Christian town that had survived Islamic State occupation as authorities announced an investigation into the blaze. Fire fighters searched the charred skeleton of the building in Qaragosh, also known as Hamdaniya, through Wednesday morning and bereaved relatives gathered outside a morgue in the nearby city of Mosul, wailing and rocking in distress. "This was not a wedding. This was hell," said Mariam Khedr, crying and hitting herself as she waited for officials to return the bod ies of her daughter Rana Yakoub, 27. and three young grandchildren, the youngest aged just eight months. Survivors said hundreds of people were at the wedding celebration, which followed an earlier church service, and the fire began about an hour into the event when flares ignited a ceiling decoration as the bride and

#### Germany announces new border controls to combat migrant surge

groom danced.

BERLIN: Germany will introduce new border controls with Poland and the Czech Republic this week, the German interior minister announced should be done to protect the European Union's fragile system of open borders. Germany saw its firsttime asylum requests rise by 78 percent in the first seven months of 2023, according to official data. In August, registered illegal border crossings to Germany reached 14,701, up 66 percent on the same month last year, police data shows. "If we do not succeed in better protecting the external borders ..., then the open borders within the EU are in danger," Nancy Faeser told reporters in Berlin. She said the focus of the new measures would be people smugglers, which she said facilitated the passage of a quarter of the migrants entering Germany. (AGENCIES)

## Iran says it has successfully launched a satellite amid tensions with the West

Authorities released footage of a rocket taking off from a mobile launcher without saying where the launch occurred.

ASSOCIATED PRESS DUBAI, SEPT 27

Iran claimed on Wednesday that it successfully launched an imaging satellite into space, a move that could further ratchet up tensions with Western nations that fear its space technology could be used to develop nuclear weapons.

Iran's Communication Minister Isa Zarepour said the Noor-3 satellite had been put in an orbit 450 kilometres above the Earth's surface, the staterun IRNA news agency reported. It was not clear when exactly the launch took place.

There was no immediate acknowledgment from Western officials of the launch or of the satellite being put into orbit. The US military did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Iran has had a series of failed launches in recent years.

The most recent launch was carried by Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, which has had more success. Gen. Hossein Salami, the top commander of the Guard, told state TV that the launch had been a "victory" and that the satellite will collect data and images.

Authorities released footage of a rocket taking off from a mobile launcher without saying where the launch occurred. Details in the video corresponded with a Guard base near Shahroud, some 330 kilometres northeast of the capital, Tehran. The base is in Semnan province, which hosts the Imam Khomeini Spaceport from which Iran's civilian space programme operates.

The Guard operates its own space programme and military infrastructure parallel to Iran's regular armed forces and answers only to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

It launched its first satellite into space in April 2020. But the head of the US Space Command later dismissed it as a "tumbling webcam in space" that would not provide vital intelligence. Western sanctions bar Iran from importing advanced spying

The United States has alleged that Iran's satellite launches defy a UN Security Council resolution and has called on Tehran to undertake no activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

The US intelligence community's 2022 threat assessment claims the development of satellite launch vehicles "shortens the timeline" for Iran to develop an intercontinental ballistic missile because it uses similar technology.

Iran has always denied seeking nuclear weapons, and says its space programme, like its nuclear activities, is for purely civilian purposes. US intelligence agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency say Iran abandoned an organised military nuclear programme in 2003.

Over the past decade, Iran has sent several short-lived satellites into orbit and in 2013 launched a monkey

The programme has seen recent troubles, however. There have been five failed launches in a row for the Simorgh programme, another satellite-carrying rocket.

A fire at the Imam Khomeini Spaceport in February 2019 killed three researchers, authorities said at the time. A launchpad rocket explosion later that year drew the attention of then-President Donald Trump, who taunted Iran with a tweet showing what appeared to be a US surveillance photo of the site.



This frame grab from video aired by Iranian state television on Wednesday shows what Iran said is a Noor-3 satellite being launched from an undisclosed location, in Iran

Tensions are already high with Western nations over Iran's nuclear programme, which has steadily advanced since Trump five years ago withdrew the US from the 2015 nuclear agreement with world powers and restored crippling sanctions on Iran.

Efforts to revive the agreement reached an impasse more than a year ago. Since then, the IAEA has said Iran has enough uranium enriched to near-weapons grade levels to build

"several" nuclear weapons if it chooses to do so. Iran is also building a new underground nuclear facility that would likely be impervious to US or Israeli airstrikes. Both countries have said they would take military action if necessary to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.

Iran has expressed willingness to return to the 2015 nuclear deal, but says the US should first ease the sanctions.

### Azerbaijan arrests former top Karabakh official

□ REUTERS

A former head of the breakaway ethnic Armenian government in Nagorno-Karabakh was arrested by Azerbaijan on Wednesday as he tried to escape into Armenia as part of an exodus of tens of thousands of people that has triggered a humanitar-

Ruben Vardanyan, a billionaire banker and philanthropist, headed Karabakh's separatist government between November 2022 and February 2023. His wife Veronika Zonabend said on his Telegram channel that he had been arrested while trying to flee as part of a mass departure by ethnic Armenians after Azerbaijan took back control of the territory last week.

Azerbaijan's border service said he had been taken to the capital Baku and handed over to other state agencies. Karabakh is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan but populated mostly by ethnic Armenians who broke away in the 1990s in the first of two wars there since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Fearing Azerbaijani reprisals because of the bloody history between the two sides, ethnic Armenians are abandoning their homes and fleeing en masse in cars and trucks along the snaking mountain road that leads to Armenia. Karabakh authorities said 47,115 people had left so far, out of an estimated ethnic Armenian population of 120,000 people.

Western governments fear a humanitarian disaster and are pressing for Azerbaijan to allow international observers into Karabakh to monitor its treatment of the local population.

"What is needed now is transpareny, and the eyes and ears of the international community on the spot, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock posted on X, formerly

## Swiss to sell back Leopard II tanks to help restock after Ukraine donations

REUTERS ZURICH, SEPT 2

Germany has welcomed a decision by neutral Switzerland to open the way to sell back some of its German-made Leopard II tanks to help rebuild stocks depleted by aid to Ukraine.

Germany had asked Switzerland in February to sell back some of the 96 Leopard II tanks it has in storage to manufacturer Rheinmetall AG.

To comply with Swiss neutrality laws, Berlin has assured Bern the weapons would not go to Kyiv, but remain in Germany or with a NATO or European Union ally. "We are very happy and grateful for

Germany's ambassador to Switzerland told Swiss TV. "We need these tanks, they will fill gaps with us and our European partners.' He was speaking after the Swiss

parliament on Tuesday approved the decommissioning of 25 Leopard II tanks, paving the way for them to be resold to Germany. Swiss public opinion has been deeply divided on the issue of supplying weapons to Ukraine and the country's blocking of re-exports has angered some nations.

Requests from Germany, Denmark and Spain to allow Swiss-made weaponry they have previously bought to go to Ukraine have been blocked by Bern citing Swiss neutrality, which prevents weapons being sent directly



A file photo shows recruits of the Swiss army Tank School 21 performing an attack exercise with the Leopard 2 tank in Bure, Switzerland

or indirectly to combatants in a war. Buying Swiss weapons could become difficult unless Bern adjusts its law on war materials, German ambassador Fluegger said.

"We have purchased a lot of weapons, systems or components or ammunition from Switzerland, including our NATO partners, and we would now like to give some of these systems to Ukraine.

The Swiss cabinet now has to for-

mally support the export of the Leopard IIs to Germany, but this is expected to be a formality after Defence Minister Viola Amherd said the supply of the tanks to Germany complied with Swiss neutrality law and was also in the country's interest.

"In this way we can also contribute to security in Europe and thus directly to the security of our country," Swiss Defence Minister Viola Amherd told Swiss broadcaster SRF.

## US soldier Travis King in US custody after expulsion from North Korea

□ REUTERS

WASHINGTON/SEOUL, SEPT 27

Private Travis King, the US soldier who ran into North Korea in July, is in US custody after being expelled by North Korea into China, US officials said on Wednesday.

North Korea's KCNA state news agency said King had been expelled after admitting to entering North Korea illegally as he was "disillusioned about unequal US society."

A US official told Reuters King was in US custody after being expelled by offer further details.

The expulsion decision was contained in the final results of an investigation into King's July border crossing published by KCNA. Last month it reported interim findings that he wanted refuge in North Korea or elsewhere because of maltreatment and racial discrimination within the army. "King confessed that he illegally

intruded into the territory of the DPRK as he harboured ill feeling against inhuman maltreatment and racial discrimination within the US army and was disillusioned about the unequal US society," KCNA said.

DPRK are the initials of the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Authorities have decided to expel

King under the country's law, KCNA said, but did not specify how, when or to where he would be expelled.

The US State Department and the White House could not be immediately reached for comment. US Forces Korea and the United Nations Command did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

King, an army private, made a sudden dash into North Korea from the South on July 18 while on a civilian tour of the Joint Security Area on the heavily fortified border between the

There have been several attempts by US soldiers stationed in South Korea to desert or defect to North Korea, but King's expulsion decision came relatively quickly: others have spent years before being released from the reclu-

Jonathan Franks, spokesperson for King's family, said: "No substantive comment expected. We need time." King's uncle, Myron Gates.

told ABC News in August that his nephew, who is Black, was experiencing racism during his military deployment, and that after he spent time in a South Korean jail, he did not sound like himself.

January 2021, faced two allegations of assault in South Korea. He pleaded guilty to one instance of assault and destroying public property for damaging a police car during a profanity-laced tirade against Koreans, according to court documents. He was due to face more disciplinary measures when he arrived back in the United States.

King had finished serving military detention and had been transported by the US military to the airport to return to his home unit in the United States. Instead, he left the airport and joined a tour of the border area, where he ran across despite attempts by South Korean and US guards to stop him.

Lim Eul-chul, a professor of North Korean studies at South Korea's Kyungnam University, said Pyongyang could have felt that any diplomatic and propaganda value in keeping King was outweighed by the likely US pressure it would face.

"It seems likely Korea saw little value in him as a countermeasure to a US human rights campaign against themselves by highlighting racial issues in America," he said.

"The decision could also mean that the political burden from detaining him for a long term would be greater than any political benefits it might bring."



A file photo shows a TV screen showing a file image of American soldier Travis King during a news programme at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea.

## Fishermen urged to keep up presence at disputed shoal



Workers unload fishing coolers at a port in Masinloc, Philippines on Tuesday.

REUTERS

The coastguard of the Philippines urged the country's fishermen on Wednesday to keep operating at the disputed Scarborough Shoal and other sites in the South China Sea, pledging to step up patrols there despite an imposing Chinese presence.

On Monday, the Philippine coastguard cut a 300-m floating barrier installed by China that blocked access

to the Scarborough Shoal, a bold response in an area Beijing has controlled for more than a decade with coastguard ships and a fleet of large fishing vessels.

Philippine vessels were unable to maintain a constant presence but were committed to protecting the rights of fishermen inside the country's exclusive economic zone (EEZ), coastguard spokesperson Commodore Jay Tarriela said.

"We're going to increase patrols in

Bajo de Masinloc and other areas where Filipino fishermen are," he told DZRH radio, referring to the shoal, one of Asia's most contested maritime features, by its Philippine name.

The Philippines has said China's response at the shoal, which Beijing calls Huangyan Island, has so far

China's foreign ministry had earlier advised the Philippines to avoid provocations and not cause trouble, but on Wednesday its spokesperson Wang Wenbin took a more critical view.

"I would also like to reiterate once again. Huangyan Island is China's inherent territory," he told a regular briefing. The so-called operation of the

gent farce.' Philippine Defence Secretary Gilbert Teodoro said the Philippines cutting of the cordon was not a provocation.

Philippine side is a purely self-indul-

"We are reacting to their action," he said during a senate hearing on Wednesday. The rocky, mid-sea outcrop is the

site of numerous diplomatic rows. Both countries claim sovereignty over the shoal, a prime fishing spot about 200 km (124 miles) off the Philippines and 850 km from mainland China and its southern island of Hainan

The shoal is close to shipping lanes that transport an estimated \$3.4 trillion of annual commerce, and control of it is strategic for Beijing, which claims sovereignty over most of the South China Sea.

Those claims complicate fisheries and offshore oil and gas activities by its Southeast Asian neighbours. Coastguard official Tarriela said

the Philippine fisheries bureau had

successfully anchored a vessel just 300 m from the Scarborough Shoal's lagoon, its closest point to the atoll since China seized it in 2012. It was not clear whether China's use

of a barrier represented a change to a status quo that has existed since 2017 in which Beijing's coastguard allowed Filipinos to operate there, albeit on a far smaller scale than Chinese vessels. It comes amid soured relations,

with the Philippines increasingly assertive over the conduct of China's coastguard in its EEZ, as it strengthens military ties with ally the United States by expanding access to "The Scarborough Shoal is closer to

the Philippines," said fisherman Pepito Fabros who had come ashore in the province of Zambales between

"Why are they stopping us from

## Nepal crash out of SAFF U-19 Championship after India loss

The young Gorkhalis lose their semi-final clash 3-2 on penalties following a 1-1 draw.





Nepal's Samir Tamang (7) and India's A Siba Prasad during their semi-final match of the SAFF U-19 Championship 2023 at the Dasharath Stadium in Kathmandu on Wendesday. (Right) Players of India celebrate after scoring a goal against Nepal

#### SPORTS BUREAU KATHMANDU, SEPT 27

exited the SAFF-U19 Championship after they lost their semi-final match to India 3-2 on penalties following a thrilling 1-1 draw at the Dasharath Stadium in

Samir Tamang struck in the 74th minute to cancel out Sahil Khursid's 26th minute opener to keep alive Nepal's bid to make it to the final for the first time since 2017.

Kathmandu on Wednesday.

But Prashant Laksam, Lachhu Thapa and Bikram Tamang all missed the spot kicks as India progressed into their fourth final and set up Saturday's title clash against Pakistan, who beat Bhutan 6-5 on penalties following a goalless draw at the same venue earlier in the afternoon.

Khursid scored his first goal of the tournament to give India the lead, pouncing on a poor clearance from Nepali defenders to smash the back of the net from inside the six-yard box.

Nepal's best chance for equaliser in the first half came in the additional

time from a corner but Tamang's header lacked precision and bounced off the ground before evading

Nepal had a golden opportunity to score two minutes into the restart when Laksam connected Nirajan Dhami with a clever through ball but Dhami's low shot hit the post.

The equaliser finally came midway into the second half when Tamang's header off a cross from Dipak Thapa Magar beat Indian goalkeeper Lionel Daryl Rymmei at the near post.

India almost finished off the game in the 79th minute when Naoba Meitei's left-footed cross deflected off Nepal's Lachhu before darting at the far post but Nepal goalkeeper and captain Jiyarat Shekh came to the rescue with a finger-tip save.

Both teams pushed for the winner in the final few minutes but could not create any clear chances, pushing the game to a penalty shootout, in which Indian goalie Daryl Rymmei turned hero.

Nepal's goalkeeper Shekh also

saved penalties from Dinesh Singh Soubam and Ricky Meetei Haomab but that was not enough to stop India from advancing.

India will now turn their attention to Pakistan as they look to win a record-extending third title.

Pakistan, who had defeated Nepal 1-0 in their opening group game, reached their first final after Bhutan's Tshetrim Pelzang missed the spot kick in the tiebreaker.

#### SAFF U-19 CHAMPIONSHIP 2023

	<u>s</u>	EMI-FINAL	<u>.s</u>
India		1-1	Nepal
Shahil Khurshi	d		Samir Tamang
India win 3-	2 on per	alties.	
Pakistan		0-0	Bhutan
Pakistan wi	n 6-5 on	penalties.	
		<b>FINAL</b>	
India	17:30,	Saturday	Paksitan

## Nepal set multiple cricket world records

#### >> Continued from page 1

This is the highest-ever partnership for the third wicket in men's T20I. New Zealand's Devon Conway and Glenn Phillips shared a 184-run partnership for the third wicket against West Indies in November 2020.

Paudel, who hit two fours and six maximums, was caught by Otgonbayar in the 18.1 overs.

But Airee's heroics in the final few overs, along with Malla's record century and Paudel's half-century, saw Nepal rack up 272 runs in 15 overs by the end of their innings.

Nepal also smashed a total of 26 sixes in their innings, the most in a T20I by a team, breaking Afghanistan's 22 sixes against Ireland in 2019 and West Indies' 22 sixes against South Africa earlier this year.

Karan KC, Abinash Bohara and Sandeep Lamichhane took two wick-

ets each for Nepal. Airee, Bhurtel and Sompal Kami pocketed one wicket

Mongolia's 23 of the 41 all out came via extras, which is the highest proportion of team runs to have come via extras in a men's T20I inning.

Except for Jamyansuren (10), none other Mongolia batters touched the double-digit figures.

Nepal next play the Maldives in

their Group A fixture on Sunday. Japan, Hong Kong and Cambodia are in Group B, while Group C consists of Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

The winners of each group will join India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan in the quarter-finals.

The fourteen participating teams were seeded according to their T20I rankings.

ASIAN GAMES 2022, CRICKET

GROUP A, HANGZHOU TOSS: Mongolia, field first.

Nepal 314-3

Kushal Malla 137\* (50), Dipendra Singh Airee 52\* (10), Rohit Paudel 61 (27); Mungun Altankhuyag 2-0-55-1 Mongolia 41-10 (13.1/20 overs)

Davaasuren Jamyansuren 10 (23), Enkh-erdene Otgonbayar 3 (12); Karan KC 2-1-1-2, Abinash Bohara 2-1-2-2, Sandeep Lamichhane 2-1-7-2

Nepal win by 273 runs.

GROUP B. HANGZHOU TOSS: Cambodia, bat first.

Cambodia 125-7

Sharwan Godara 36\* (23), Lakshit Gupta 24 (33); Ryan Drake 4-0-15-3

**Japan 126-7** (18.1/20 overs)

Kendel Kadowaki-Fleming 35 (23), Lachlan Yamamoto-Lake 32 (26); Sharwan Godara 4-0-25-3. Ram Sharan 4-0-24-2

Japan win by three wickets.

#### NEPAL'S MEN'S T20I RECORDS

#### HIGHEST TOTAL IN T201

314-3 vs Mongolia, 2023 Previous record

Afghanistan, 278-3 vs Ireland, 2019 **FASTEST T201 CENTURY** 

Kushal Malla - 34 balls vs Mongolia, 2023 Previous records

David Miller (South Africa) - 35 balls vs Bangladesh, 2017

Rohit Sharma (India) - 35 balls vs Sri Lanka, 2017 Sudesh Wickramasekara (Czech Republic)

35 balls vs Turkey, 2019 **FASTEST T201 HALF-CENTURY** 

Dipendra Singh Airee - nine balls vs Mongolia, 2023 Previous record

Yuvraj Singh (India) - 12 balls vs England, 2007 **BIGGEST WINNING MARGIN BY RUNS** 

273-run win vs Mongolia, 2023

Previous record

Czech Republic's 208-run win vs Panama, 2021

#### HIGHEST THIRD WICKET PARTNERSHIP

Kushal Malla, Rohit Paudel - 193 runs vs Mongolia, 2023

Devon Conway, Glenn Phillips (New Zealand) -184 runs vs West Indies, 2020

#### MOST SIXES IN AN INNINGS

26 sixes vs Mongolia, 2023

Afghanistan - 22 sixes vs Ireland, West Indies - 22 sixes vs South Africa, 2023



Nepal Indira Basnet battles against Melika Mirhosseini Vakili of Iran during the women's -67kg Round of 16 match of taekwondo competition at the Asian Games 2022 in Hangzhou, China on Wednesday. Nepal's dismal performance in 3×3 basketball, boxing, handball, judo, squash, table tennis, taekwondo and swimming events at Asiad continued on Wednesday as well.

### **HOROSCOPE**

## ARIES (March 21-April 19)

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

thing, focus on healing.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

important to demand from the universe. You'll likely see a big culmination around your heart's desires, so reflect on what you've built toward and step into your power.

While you may choose privacy and rest now, it's

a fantastic moment to reflect on how you've

built your love life in the past and how it's led

you to be here now. If you need to release any-

An exhilarating event may now pop onto your

radar where you will meet many new friends,

network with new people, and potentially even

meet a suitor who inspires you. If you are single,

this is an ideal moment to try online dating.

instrument 64 Weight unit for

gems 67 Surrealist

68 Kind of lilv

69 Appearance

71 Himalayan

leaend 72 Choir member

70 Farm animals

73 Rocker Jagger

1 Hefty slice2 Edible tuber

3 Concerning

(2 wds.) 4 Simple poems

6 Jamaican

export

5 Cookout need

Sound booster

**DOWN** 

63 Brass



CANCER (June 22-July 22)

Someone will entice you.

VIRGO (August 23-September 22)

you're proudly displaying your lover as a prize or are ashamed to be public about who you're with, this will tell you a lot about where you stand and the kind of relationship



LEO (July 23-August 22) Plan a trip now or for later in the year ahead.

sider dating outside of your normal type.

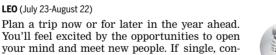
You will likely put a microscope on your rela-

tionships, seeing where they stand around inti-

macy or if your needs are being fulfilled in your

partnership. For couples, this is an excellent

period to get physical while you discuss your



SCORPIO (October 23-November 21)

LIBRA (September 23-October 22)

burn yourself out.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21)



You will be especially busy at work, as you now have to attend to many responsibilities, projects, and routines. Understanding your authentic work-life balance is crucial now so you don't

Singles may meet a suitor who lights them on fire and is a major possibility for finding true

love. Couples can use this lunation to reignite

the spark in their relationship. If you and

your partner have children, bring news of a

Singles should be on the lookout for a suitor

who possesses long-term potential. However, if

you are not in alignment, you are just as likely

to part ways, leaving one another in the dust.



**CAPRICORN** (December 22-January 19)

Dig deep into your emotions with your love or assess how your living space promotes pleasure, connection, and entertainment. If coupled up, decide to spend time enjoying a home-cooked meal or take-out.

**AQUARIUS** (January 20-February 18)

Consider heading to high territory or mountains where you can watch the sunrise or the sunset This would energize both of your spirits and fan the flames of your love. Don't let this gorgeous energy go to waste!

## PISCES (February 19-March 20)

Consider mapping out a budget and strategy so that you're always saving for that nest egg or rainy day. Just don't get too fired up to spend it all in one place! If an expense crops up, consider talking it out with your lover.

### CROSSWORD

### **ACROSS**

- topper 5 Vulgar
- 16 Poker payment
- 20 Baby 22 Spicy sauce

24 Engrave

- 26 Hits the slopes
- stopwatch 35 Self-importance
- 41 Crowbar 43 "East of -44 Of birds 46 Ohio or
- Mississippi 48 — and outs 49 Taut 50 Individual
- 52 Parting word (hyph.) 55 — Scotia 56 Austere

59 Leaseholder

- 1 Christmas tree
- 10 Combine resources 14 Mascara target 15 "To err is -
- 17 Pretentious 18 Pretty large 19 Render useless
- 27 Seat in a tavern 31 Used a
- 36 Roof edges 38 Actor — Carell 39 Struggle for air
  - Epsom 9 Move furtively 10 Hanger-on 11 Burden
    - 13 Comedian Jay 21 Suffix with "disk"

12 Of the ear

- 23 Pieces
- 25 Stay airborne 27 Fathered 28 Desert plant 29 Pine derivative

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

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DIFFICULTY RATING:

## Not just a man of science

Dr Nawaraj KC, a paediatrician and author, discusses how he juggles his passion for literature and committment to medical career.

r Nawaraj KC is not just a man of science—he is also a man of the written words. A paediatrician by profession, he has dedicated years of his life to the medical field, all the while holding a special place in his heart for literature. It is his passion for his work and love for words, that led to the publication of his first novel, 'Shunya Ko Mulya', a book about the struggles of motherhood and the importance of maternal health.

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE



In this interview with the Post's Manushree Mahat, KC discusses his lifelong passion for literature and the need for medical literature that reflects Nepal's healthcare landscape.

When did your reading journey begin, and how has it taken shape over the years? Reading has been a significant part of my life ever since I was young.

My father was a

teacher, so I would often

days immersed in Mahabharata and Ramayana comics. As I grew older, I started reading the works of Bhairav Aryal and Shankar Lamichhane. My love for literature

eventually led me to a career in writing. During my school days, I often penned poems and stories, earning recognition and prizes for some of my work. My love for books continued to grow

find magazines and novels lying around

the house. The school library also held

a special place in my heart, where I

fondly remember spending my early

even as I moved from Surkhet to Kathmandu for my +2 education. I became a regular visitor to The British Council Library, where I spent my mornings and evenings surrounded by books. I became so familiar with the library that I could almost recite the location of every book. However, my pursuit of a medical

degree led to a decline in my reading habits. Medical textbooks dominated my life during that time. Nevertheless, I never let go of literature entirely. When I began working as a doctor, I rekin-

dled my love for reading, although

my reading preferences shifted.

These days, I find myself drawn to non-fiction and scientific research-based books that offer insights into societal change. One book that significantly contributed to my research and writing is 'Why Gender Matters in Economy', which explores how gender discrimination hinders global economic progress. However, I haven't entirely abandoned

fiction, of course. I

still enjoy books by

Amar Neupane and Buddhisagar. Recently, I've also started reading all of Laxmi Prasad Devkota's works.

You have talked about the importance of scientific books in influencing social change. Can you share your experience in translating science and humanism into your book?

I began writing my novel when I was so touched by the people I encountered that I felt like I couldn't contain my emotions any longer. As a new doctor, my focus was initially solely on the child's condition, going through all the procedures I had to as a paediatrician—all that my medical degree had taught me.

KC's debut novel, 'Shunya Ko Mulya', is about the struggles of motherhood and the importance of maternal health.

However, I soon began to notice the mothers who had travelled for days to seek medical help for their children. Recognising that mothers are the f oundation of our society, I realised that we can't achieve genuine peace and prosperity unless we do everything possible to support maternal health. Writing my book was a lengthy process involving extensive data collection. While collecting quantitative data was challenging, adding an emotional

dimension to my characters to authen-

tically portray their struggles proved to be the real difficulty.

Do you think the healthcare system is adequately represented in literature?

No, I don't believe it is yet.

Most books that medical professionals read are centred around research in communities outside of Nepal. There are very few research-based books focusing on the healthcare situations within Nepal, which can alienate our

I also think patients bring life to hospitals. They bring painful yet real stories and experiences. As doctors, we witness these hardships up close. It's essential to bring the struggles of our local people into the spotlight. As healthcare workers, we have the power to shed light on these human stories and drive social and policy change. Medical literature is evolving, and I hope it continues to expand in the years

Based on our discussion, it's clear that empathy is crucial in the field of medicine. How do you view the role of our education system in nurturing these essential qualities in future doctors, and how can literature contribute to

One of the most important things in medicine is the principle of studying the patient's medical history. Empathy is closely connected to improved diagnostic skills because being a good listener enables a more precise understanding of the patient's problems.

However, our education system has room for improvement in this regard. We should train our doctors to understand the language and experiences of local people. Personally, I felt that my medical education was incomplete until I began to observe and connect with the stories of the people in Surkhet. To enhance our medical programmes, we need to integrate humanism into the sciences. Until we achieve this, literature remains one of the most effective means to share the stories of our local communities.

The positive response to my book, both from the general audience, who appreciated its focus on motherhood, and from policymakers who provided feedback, reinforces my belief that the involvement of medical professionals in literature can significantly contribute to driving changes

### Dr Nawaraj KC's book recommendations



**Seto Dharti** Author:

Amar Neupane **Publisher:** FinePrint 2012

Seto Dharti explores the unjust and harmful practice of child marriage. It's written in a beautiful yet heart-wrenching prose. This book will evoke a range of emotions in you-I shed tears, shared laughter, and felt everything in between while reading it.



Karnali Blues Buddhisagar Author: **Publisher:** FinePrint 2010

This book holds a special place in my heart. It's a book set in my hometown, where I've been practising medicine for years. Many of us have read the Nepali version, and I believe the English translation is equally significant in promoting Nepali literature on the global stage.



**Why Gender Matters in Economics** Mukesh Eswaran Author: **Publisher:** Princeton University Press

Why Gender Matters in Economy is a highly research-oriented book that examines how gender discrimination hinders economic progress. I've mentioned it extensively in my own book

because it presents crucial discussions



**Buddhakalin Samaj** 

in a clear and logical way.

Umakanta Poudyal Author: **Publisher:** FinePrint 2023

I recently read Buddhakalin Samaj, which is another well-researched and beautifully written novel that explores the time, culture, society and system during Buddha's times.



Sociobiology Author:

Edward O Wilson **Publisher:** Harvard University Press

Sociobiology is a book that explores the biological and social evolution of humans and other living creatures. I believe everyone should read it to better understand how we have evolved socially

## A walkathon for breast cancer awareness

PHOTO: COURTESY OF AMIT RAWAL

POST REPORT

otiviti Cares has announced PINKWalk, a fundraising and awareness walkathon for breast cancer. Cotiviti Cares is the corporate social responsibility team of Cotiviti Nepal, a healthcare informatics organisation with headquarters

The organisers reveal they aim to have a positive impact on the community, particularly in the areas of health, education, and the environment, through the event.

According to Cotiviti Nepal, the primary objective of the PINKWalk is to increase awareness about breast cancer, promote early detection, show support for those affected by the disease, and raise funds for research, treatment, and support. All proceeds from the event will go to the Cancer Care Nepal Society, an organisation working to fight against breast cancer.

Interested participants can register for the event via IMEPay. On-the-spot registration will also be available on the day of the event. PINKWalk will take place on September 30, starting at 6:00 am. Participants will move through Narayan Chaur, Nagpokhari, Kantipath, Sohrakhutte and Shova Bhagwati during the walkathon. The event will end at Swayambhu.

'We are eager to raise awareness about this important cause," says Shashank Shrestha, a software engineer at Cotiviti Nepal.



What: Pinkathon September 30 When: **Time:** 6:00 am to 10:00 am Starting point: Narayan Chaur, Kathmandu

## Hollywood writers' strike is over after guild leaders approve contract with studios

The writers still have to vote to ratify the contract themselves in early October, but lifting the strike will allow them to work during that process.

ANDREW DALTON LOS ANGELES, US

ollywood's writers' strike was declared over after nearly five months Tuesday night when board members from their union approved a contract agreement with studios, bringing the industry at least partly back from a historic halt in production.

The governing boards of the eastern and western branches of the Writers Guild of America and their joint negotiating committee all voted to accept the deal, two days after the tentative agreement was reached with a coalition of Hollywood's biggest studios, streaming services and production companies. After the vote they declared that the strike would be over and writers would be free to start on scripts at 12:01 am Wednesday.

Late-night talk shows—the first to go dark when writers walked out on May 2—are likely the first shows that will resume. Scripted shows will take longer to return, with actors still on strike and no negotiations yet on the horizon.

The writers still have to vote to ratify the contract themselves in early October, but lifting the strike will allow them to work during that process, the guild told members in

After Tuesday's board votes, the contracts were released for the first time to the writers, who had not yet been given any details on the deal, which their leaders called "exceptional".

The three-year agreement includes significant wins in the main areas writers had fought for—compensation, length of employment, size of staff and control of artificial intelligencematching or nearly equaling what they had sought at the outset of the strike.

The union had sought minimum increases in pay and future residual earnings from shows of between 5 percent and 6 percent depending on the position of the writer. The studios had wanted between 2 percent and 4 percent. The compromise deal was a raise of between 3.5 percent and 5 percent.

The guild also negotiated new residual payments based on the popularity of streaming shows, where writers will get bonuses for being a part of the most popular shows on Netflix, Max and other services, a proposal studios initially rejected. Many writers on picket lines had complained that they weren't



properly paid for helping create heavily watched properties.

The writers also got the requirement they sought that shows intended to run at least 13 episodes will have at least six writers on staff, with the numbers shifting based on the number of episodes. They did not get their desire for guaranteed staffs of six on shows that had not yet been ordered to series, settling instead for a guaranteed three.

Writers also got a guarantee that staffs on shows in initial development will be employed for at least 10 weeks, and that staffs on shows that go to air will be employed for three weeks

On artificial intelligence, the writers got the regulation and control of the emerging technology they had sought. Under the contract, raw, AI-generated storylines will not be regarded as "literary material"—a term in their contracts for scripts and other story forms a screenwriter produces. This means they won't be competing with computers for screen credits.

Nor will AI-generated stories be considered 'source" material, their contractual language for the novels, video games or other works that writers may adapt into scripts.

Writers have the right under the deal to use AI in their process if the company they are working for agrees and other conditions are met. However, companies cannot require a writer to use AI.

Still-striking members of the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists returned to the picket lines earlier Tuesday for the first time since the writers struck their tentative deal, and they were animated by a new spirit of optimism.

"For a hot second, I really thought that this was going to go on until next year," said Marissa Cuevas, an actor who has appeared on the TV series 'Kung Fu' and 'The Big Bang Theory'. "Knowing that at least one of us has gotten a good deal gives a lot of hope that we will also get a good deal."

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